

CITY OF SEATTLE

ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Proposal Name: North Shore Recreation Area, Sand Point Magnuson Park

Address of Proposal: 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115

BACKGROUND DATA

Existing Conditions

The proposed North Shore Recreation Area (NSRA) is located at the northwestern corner of the former Sand Point Naval Station property. It is separated from the rest of the Sand Point Magnuson Park property by the east-west road that connects the NOAA property to Sand Point Way NE. Access to the NSRA site is by a local road that runs north-south under this NOAA access road. (See Figure 2 attached to the SEPA Checklist). The eastern 3/4 of this 18-acre site includes a substantial area of hard space, including the Navy's former aircraft storage and operational area surrounding the large hangar building (Building 27). The area north and west of Pier One and Building 11 (former public works/shops facility) is largely unpaved. The shoreline and cove (Pontiac Bay) in that area were used by Navy personnel and families for small boating and related upland recreation, but the dock facilities and shoreline are currently in poor condition.

In the past few years, the extensive concrete area east of Building 11 has been used to store small watercraft that are hand launched from floats and the small beach area northwest of Building 11. This allows some small boat usage and instruction on a modest scale, but it is a makeshift arrangement that does not utilize the site's potential as a major, multipurpose public recreational resource. Shoreline recreation in that area has been limited by poor condition of the existing armored shoreline and disrepair of the small docks offshore. Public use of the shoreline is limited by the high concrete bulkhead between the seaplane ramp and Pier One.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposal is to implement a number of improvements at the North Shore Recreation Area to develop a non-motorized boating center and picnic area. Several small existing upland structures would be removed, including Buildings 40, 115/206, and 402, to free the site up for unobstructed public recreation. A 1,260 sq. ft. portion of Building 31, an over-water structure alongside Pier One, would be demolished as part of the shoreline habitat improvement in that vicinity. The site plan illustrated in

Figure 4 attached to the SEPA checklist highlights the specific improvements that will accommodate four primary uses:

- Non-Motorized Boating Center
- Picnic Area
- Habitat Restoration Area
- Multi-Use area

SEPA DETERMINATION:

Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS), subject to the measures identified in the attached *Water Quality and Fish Habitat Mitigation Plan* dated November, 2001, and to the following additional mitigating measures:

- **Light and Glare:** Outdoor lighting will be designed in accordance with the Sand Point Park Design Guidelines. Prior to actual installation of new lighting, a public information process will invite interested members of the public to review alternative lighting systems that can minimize impacts on their views, consistent with the need to provide adequate security lighting of the site.
- **Historic and Cultural Preservation:** Modifications of Building # 31 to create the Habitat Restoration Area will be consistent with the *Sand Point Historic Properties Reuse and Protection Plan* guidelines and consultation procedures applicable to contributing elements within the Sand Point Historic District, which includes the NSRA and Building # 31. During construction, if any evidence of an archaeological nature is observed, work will be stopped immediately and proper resource agencies and tribes will be contacted to observe and assess this evidence before construction is resumed.

Area Development

The proposed NSRA is somewhat separated from other parts of the Sand Point Magnuson Park property, obtained from the federal government when the U.S. Navy in 1972 and 1996 surplussed its Naval Station in two separate increments. The NSRA is connected to the park by a north-south park road that passes under the east-west access road to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) complex that occupies part of the surplussed Navy property. The NOAA access road is the southern boundary of the NSRA site (see Figure 4 attached to Checklist). Sand Point Magnuson Park is surrounded on 3 sides by Lake Washington, and lies east of the View Ridge residential neighborhood. Much of that neighborhood is single family housing, but some of the area located directly west of Sand Point Way is multifamily condominium and apartment development. The regional Burke Gilman Trail that connects Gas Works Park and the University of Washington with Lake Sammamish runs parallel to Sand Point Way, within approximately 200 feet of the NSRA's western boundary.

Proposal Description

As the Summary of Proposed Action above indicates, the proposal is to develop the NSRA as a center for non-motorized boating, with areas of it designated for picnicking and multiple recreation uses, and a habitat restoration area along the shoreline. Figure 4 attached to the SEPA checklist illustrates the proposed uses to be developed as funding allows. The major elements are summarized below:

- Non-motorized boating center: This will be the main recreational focus of the NSRA, providing storage and hand-launching facilities for kayaks, canoes, sailboards, sailboats, outrigger canoes and similar watercraft. At the end of the existing main pier (Pier One) a new “fast launch” float would replace the existing float, and allow a group of rigged sailboats to be available for use at the same time. This would be advantageous for short-duration after-school classes. Three floating docks and 3 boat ramps would also be constructed for hand-launching of boats along the bulkhead-protected shoreline southeast of Pier One.

The bulkhead itself would be left in place, but its face would be covered with fine gravel and sand to create a beach area to serve watercraft that can be launched from a beach rather than a dock or ramp. Approximately 1,500 cubic yards of beach material would be imported to create this beach area extending outward into the lake from the existing bulkhead. (See cross sections A and B attached to the SEPA Checklist). The recreational use and appearance of this area will be substantially enhanced. A pedestrian promenade would be developed along the edge of this modified bulkhead/beach area, and connect it to the pier and other park areas. Much of the concrete surface upland from the existing bulkhead/beach area would be designated for outdoor storage of small boats on dry land.

The proposed project would introduce 5,650 sq. ft. of new over-water structures (three new floating docks and a fast launch float), but would also remove an existing small pier, two floats, one dolphin, a floating boathouse, part of Building 31 (adjacent to the big pier), and a 130-foot section of the log boom. The total removal of 5,825 sq. ft. would reduce the net area of over-water coverage by 175 sq. ft. Most in-water structures to be removed are made of creosote-treated wood, while none of the new structures would be.

An existing concrete parking area located south of the boat storage area and west of the Hangar Building 27 would be retained for boaters and other park visitors. Existing paved areas adjacent to Building 11 would continue to be used for vehicle parking. Other parking would be located where buildings 40 and 115/206 are removed. A paved load/unload area and turnarounds along the access road that terminates near Pier One would be constructed.

- Picnic Area: The upland slope west of Pontiac Bay and Building 11 would be improved for unstructured recreation such as picnicking, viewing and walking. It would be revegetated with grass and native trees and shrubs, consistent with guidelines in the Sand Point Magnuson Park Vegetation Management Plan. A new covered picnic shelter would replace the existing one along a new accessible pathway up the slope.
- Habitat restoration area: A key element of the proposed project is to restore 0.23-acres of aquatic habitat along the shoreline west of Pier One. Existing armoring including a concrete block bulkhead would be removed and excavation behind it would expand the existing amount of shoreline habitat

by approximately ¼ acre. The shoreline would be planted with native emergent and scrub shrub vegetation.

- Multi-use area: The paved area east of Hangar Building 27 would be improved with landscaping and more clearly defined pedestrian access through the area, including a connection to the pedestrian promenade along the shoreline. The existing parking area would continue to be used for a variety of different recreational uses and special events.

Public Comment

During 2000 and 2001, public meetings were held on the following days to discuss and obtain comment on plans for development of the North Shore Recreation Area:

Year 2000 meetings:

October 25

November 2

November 16

December 13

Year 2001 meetings:

January 10

July 16

September 13

October 9

During the planning process, the public expressed support for access to the water for many different types of boating. They also wanted amenities provided for the non-boating public, such as a picnic area and a walk along the waterfront. Access from Sand Point Way and an eventual connection to the Burke Gilman Trail was important to them. Provision for habitat and restoration of the shoreline to a natural condition were also considered important.

Balancing these desires, the proposed North Shore Recreation Area project provides for public non-motorized boating access to Lake Washington, non-motorized boat storage, pedestrian and bicycle access to the North Shore Area from Sand Point Way NE, a new picnic area, shoreline habitat restoration, and a public promenade along the shoreline. The path from Sand Point Way NE to the North Shore Recreation Area will be at a slope which meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The proposed NSRA would provide the only such facility on Lake Washington specifically designed for disabled persons' access to boating. Because of these project elements the public has been very supportive of the project.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

Initial disclosure of potential impacts from this project was made in the applicant's environmental checklist, dated September 15, 2001. Information in the checklist and supplemental information attached to it, and the lead agency's experience with review of similar projects, form the basis for this analysis and decision.

Short Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: (1) temporary soil erosion and possible water turbidity in the lake waters immediately offshore from the project site due to upland grading, placement of 1,500 cu. yds. of beach material beyond the bulkhead, and excavation of 4,000 cu. yds. of material to expand the shoreline in the Habitat Restoration Area; (2) disturbance of birds and waterfowl currently occupying or using existing vegetation and shoreline at the proposed Habitat Restoration Area excavation site; (3) decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during excavation, filling and transport of materials to and from the site; (4) increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; (5) increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel; (6) tracking of mud onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles; and (7) delays of traffic on Sand Point Way and possibly Sand Point Magnuson Park's internal road system by construction vehicles/activities. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope.

Although not significant, the impacts are potentially adverse and for that reason are addressed by City codes and/or ordinances, and State of Washington regulations, specifically:

- City of Seattle Grading and Drainage Control Ordinance (storm water runoff, temporary soil erosion and site excavation);
- City of Seattle Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas, Ord. 116253 as amended by Ord. 116976 (development standards for potential liquefaction zones and steep slopes);
- City of Seattle Street Use Ordinance (tracking of mud onto city streets, and potential traffic restrictions during hauling and delivery of soils). Regarding potential traffic delays on adjoining streets during construction, the applicant will confine most construction material delivery, storage and staging activities on Parks and Recreation Department property, off the streets.
- City of Seattle Noise Control Ordinance (construction equipment);
- City of Seattle Shoreline Master Program, Chapter 23.60 of the Seattle Municipal Code, (development standards, design review, sign standards, dredging standards, landfill and creation of dry land, natural beach protection);
- State of Washington Hydraulic Project Approval issued by the Department of Fish & Wildlife under 75.20 RCW (construction work waterward and landward of the Ordinary High Water Line that will directly impact fish life and habitat);
- State of Washington Approval to Allow Temporary Exceedance of Water Quality Standards issued by the Department of Ecology under 90.48 RCW (for in-water work causing changes in turbidity from sediment disturbances);

Compliance with these applicable codes, ordinances and regulations will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation. The traffic and parking demand impacts of construction personnel, and other impacts not noted above as mitigated by codes or conditions, are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by conditioning.

Long Term Impacts

Long term impacts of the proposed project are favorable. The City of Seattle's Shoreline Master Program designates shoreline in this area as "Conservancy Recreation". Such areas are intended to "...use the natural ecological system for production of food, for recreation, and to provide access by the public for recreational use of the shorelines." The North Shore Recreation Areas site is currently underutilized because of obsolete and deteriorating facilities. The proposal is to renovate and make it

usable for small boat access and storage, and other low-key activities such as walking, bicycling and picnicking. The Department of Parks and Recreation and selected non-profit organizations would then be able to expand their boating instruction and recreational programs at this improved site. Non-motorized boats, small enough to be launched by hand from beach access points and/or floats, would generate negligible air pollution or noise impacts, and would substantially enhance the City's ability to conduct recreation activities uniquely suited to the site. The proposed shoreline modifications and changes in boat launching facilities will result in a net increase of aquatic habitat and a net decrease of structures over the water surface, and a substantial reduction of chemically-treated wood products in the water. Key environmental impacts specifically include the following:

- Removal of armored shoreline west of Pier One and creation of an approximately ¼ acre Habitat Restoration Area, providing shallow vegetated waters that provide favorable hiding and resting places for juvenile chinook and coho salmon to avoid predators;
- Placement of approximately 1,500 cubic yards of beach gravel sloping down to the lake from the present edge of the bulkhead southeast of Pier One. The resulting 630 lineal feet of beach/gravel substrate habitat is expected to dissipate wave energy and therefore enhance the foraging and resting habitat for juvenile chinook salmon.
- Revegetation of the slope northwest of Building 11 with native trees and shrubs, improving the area's habitat value and appearance;
- Reduction of the total water surface area now covered by over-water structure, at elevations most critical to juvenile salmon, reducing the amount of shaded area preferred by predators on juvenile salmon;
- Demolition of 3 small buildings and a floating boathouse, removing non-functional structures that do not contribute to the public recreational purposes of the plan. The sites of these buildings will be restored consistent with the plan.

DECISION

This decision was made after the responsible official, on behalf of the lead agency, reviewed a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and final decision on application of SEPA's substantive authority and mitigation provisions. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment, subject to the condition that the applicant will implement the *Water Quality and Fish Habitat Mitigation Plan*, and two other conditions previously specified under the SEPA Determination subtitle in this Analysis and Decision report. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)[C].
- [] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

[] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

Signature (signed by Peter S. Marshall), Sr. Park Planner, Planning and Development Division,
Department of Parks and Recreation

Date 11/26/01

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